Fragile: Handle With Care

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Fragile: Handle With Care

by Bordementions

Summary

You and Mostima run into a little mishap while out on delivery

Notes

Once again trying and likely probably failing at doing work for other medias but we'll see how long it lasts, more mostima cause I have an unnatural level of obsession for this weird fucked up blue thing. I wanna beat it with a stick and then also kiss him really passionately on the lips platonic style. Anyways yeah happy ending for everyone itll be all sunshine and rainbows I swear I would never write any angst or hurt itll all be okay smiles

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

The distant, low rumble of the transport vibrated through the footwell, a constant that you could barely register beneath the chaotic symphony of an active front line. Outside, the sky over the contested borderlands of the Kazdelian marches was choked with the black, greasy smoke of burning engines and artillery fire.

Rhodes Island didn't usually contract Penguin Logistics for direct combat resupply, but when a joint task force got pinned down a couple sectors deep into a high-intensity warzone, Emperor's boys and girls were the only ones crazy and fast enough to take the contract. Crate after crate of military-grade medical supplies, armor-piercing munitions, and ration packs were stacked high in the armored bay behind you.

In the driver's seat, Mostima kept one hand casually on the steering wheel, her eyes scanning the desolate, mortar-pocked road ahead, dark blue hair shifting with the uneven bounce of the suspension.

And of course right beside her in the passenger seat, was you, just like always. Though you smelled a bit more like copper and burnt Kevlar than usual.

"You know," Mostima said, her voice smooth, light, somehow unbothered by the artillery shell that detonated not even a quarter of a mile to her left, "when Emperor said we were taking an express run, I thought he meant extra tips. I didn't realize he meant we'd be playing target practice for two different armies."

A ragged, sharp breath hissed through your teeth as you leaned back against the headrest. Pressing down on your lower torso with both hands, the thick tactical gloves were already soaked through with dark blood.

An hour back, a squad of local insurgents had ambushed the supply lane. You had leaned out the passenger window, laying down suppression fire to keep a pair of technicals from blowing out the truck's rear tires. You got the job done, cause they were no more than a burning wrecks in a ditch, but you had paid a pretty hefty toll. Two heavy-caliber rounds had punched straight through the door panel and caught you cleanly in the lower abdomen, right below your ballistic plate.

"Focus on... the road, Mosti," you grunted, your voice raspy. Every small bump in the dirt highway sent a sickening lurch of pain through your body. "If you hit a ditch... I think my internal organs are going to swap places."

Mostima glanced sideways, her wry smile curling the corner of her lips. But beneath the laid-back expression, her cyan eyes narrowed just a fraction as they swept over the slick red puddle pooling around your waist. Her black, dimly lit halo flickered faintly above her head, casting a dull shadow against the roof of the cab.

"Hey, give me some credit. I've driven through worse roads in Siracusa with three flat tires," she replied, her tone casually deflected, though her hand tightened slightly on the wheel. "How are those field dressings holding up?"

"They're soaked," you muttered, wincing as you tried to apply fresh pressure with a crumpled pack of military gauze from the dashboard med kit. "The entry wounds are bad. I sealed what I could with the foam applicator, but... internal bleeding's definitely a thing right now."

"Mmm. Field foam isn't going to do much for a slug like that," Mostima noted, downshifting as she steered the rig around the burning chassis of an overturned vehicle. "Hold tight for a second."

Pulling her glove off with her teeth, she reached out with her right hand and gently pressed her palm against the side of your neck, checking your pulse. Her skin felt cool, almost unnaturally calm amidst the heat surrounding you.

"Pulse is racing, skin is pale," she recited with the casual air of someone reading a restaurant menu. "You're going into shock. Sure you don't want me to pull over into one of these nice, quiet trenches and play doctor properly?"

"We pull over... we miss the rendezvous window," you gasped, your knuckles turning white as you clamped down harder on your stomach. "Rhodes Island's advance unit... they're running on empty and we're all they got. If we don't drop these munitions in the next twenty minutes... they get overrun. The delivery comes first. You know the rules."

Mostima let out a soft chuckle, though there was a subtle edge to it as her tongue briefly touched her upper lip in thought.

"The rules, huh? Emperor would be so proud of your work ethic. I'm

practically moved to tears," she said, steering through a cloud of drifting tear gas and ash. "Though personally, I prefer my co-pilots alive. It's pretty boring driving across Terra all by myself. I'd think you would know that."

"I'll... buy you all the dim sum you can eat in Lungmen... if you just keep your foot on the gas," you rasped, a weak smile breaking through the grimace of pain on your face.

"Now that's a binding contract," Mostima said, her voice dropping into that effortlessly charming register. "Alright then. Hold on to your seat. We're entering the hot zone."

Up ahead, the shattered skyline of a ruined border town loomed. Tracers crisscrossed the dusk sky, and the sound of heavy fire echoed off the crumbling concrete structures. The final stretch to the Rhodes Island defensive line lay directly through the main thoroughfare.

Mostima reached behind her seat with her right hand, gloved fingers wrapping around the handle of one of her staffs. With a soft metallic clack, she loosened it from the harness.

A heavy, suffocating pressure instantly filled the space. The ambient air seemed to thicken, the sound of the engine dampening into a low, distorted hum as the slumbering, ominous consciousness within the dual staves briefly stirred under her command.

"Mosti..." you coughed, blood staining the corner of your mouth. "Don't... don't wreck the truck using those in here..."

"Relax," she murmured softly, her eyes glinting with an unfathomable light as she looked out at an enemy squad positioning an anti-vehicle explosive at the end of the street. "Seventy percent-ish should do the trick."

She didn't even point the staff out the window; she simply tapped the pommel of the against the dashboard.

Instantly, the world outside the front windshield seemed to warp. The flying shrapnel, the incoming rocket, the rushing enemy infantry, everything slowed to a crawl. The smoke hung suspended in the air like frozen dark clouds; the fiery tail of the rocket stretched out into a motionless line of amber light.

Mostima casually turned the steering wheel, gliding the smoothly around everything, weaving through the suspended enemy line as if

navigating an empty parking lot.

Inside the cab, time moved normally, but the sheer gravity of her Arts made your head swim, the pain in your gut throb violently with every heartbeat.

"There," Mostima said lightly as you burst through the frozen barricade and back into normal space. Behind you, the localized time distortion snapped back into place with a deafening sonic boom, the rocket slamming harmlessly into an empty building further back.

She re-slotted the staff behind her back, the crushing weight in the air vanishing instantly.

"Not bad, right?" she asked, glancing over at you. Her smile faded slightly when she saw your head slumping against the window glass, your breathing shallow and labored, your hands barely able to keep pressure on the drenched bandages anymore.

"Hey," she said, her voice dropping its playful cadence for just a fraction of a second. She reached over, her hand gripping your shoulder, firm and solid. "Stay with me now. Look out the window."

You forced your eyelids open, staring through a haze of red and grey.

Ahead, the logos of Rhodes Island field vehicles gleamed behind a fortified wall. Operators were already flagging the truck down, opening the gates to receive the emergency drop.

"We made it," you whispered, the tension finally draining from your limbs, bringing a wave of freezing cold numbness with it.

"We made it," Mostima agreed smoothly, pulling the transport into the landing bay with a hiss of pneumatic brakes. She killed the engine and immediately unbuckled her belt, swinging herself over the center console to lean down over you.

She looked at you with that same unshakeable demeanor, the smile back on her lips, masking whatever depth lay behind those luminous blue eyes. She touched your cheek with a gloved hand, her thumb gently wiping a smudge of dirt and blood from your skin.

"Job's done. Delivery complete," she murmured lightly, hailing the panicked Rhodes Island medical team scrambling toward the doors. "Just sit tight, partner."

The rear doors of the transport truck suddenly slammed open, revealing a chaos of shouts, flashing lights, and the heavy metallic clang of crates being hauled out. Two Rhodes Island field medics clambered into the high cab, their visors down and uniforms spattered with undiscernible mixture of grime.

"Get the trauma kits from loading!" one yelled over the thunder of heavy artillery pounding the perimeter outside. "We've got a severe abdominal bleed here, two entry wounds, active shock!"

Hands moved rapidly around you. Scissors snipped away your ruined vest, exposing the shredded, blood-soaked undershirt beneath. A cold antiseptic spray stung like fire against the torn flesh, followed by the quick, shoving pressure of gauze and a makeshift pressure clamp anchored around your waist.

You squeezed your eyes shut, gasping as a wave of nausea washed over you. Beside you, Mostima stood in the tight space between the seats, her arms casually folded over her chest, her head tilted as she watched the medics work. Her expression despite how she tried to keep it, tracked every rapid movement of the bandages, noting the speed at which the fresh gauze turned dark red.

A senior medic stepped into the cab, checking the vitals monitor hooked to your wrist, her face hardening behind her visor. She turned abruptly to Mostima, pulling her aside toward the open passenger door.

"Is this the co-driver?" the senior medic asked, her voice clipped and strained under the pressure of the ongoing battle.

"That's right," Mostima replied, a light, easy smile resting on her face. "Delivered right on time, along with all those shiny crates in the back. I assume you have some kind of nice, warm hospital set up back there to fix my partner up?"

The medic let out a grim, exhausted breath, looking past Mostima at the bleeding form in the seat. "We don't. Our forward operating base was shelled two hours ago. We're down to three field surgeons, our primary Originium generator is failing, and we have forty-seven critical Rhodes Island personnel lined up already."

Mostima's smile didn't fade, pressing on anyways despite the seemingly dire news. "I'm sure you can find a small corner for one more. I'm really not picky about the accommodations."

"You don't understand, Transporter," the medic said, dropping her voice, though the tension was unmistakable. "Directives from Colonel Dobermann are absolute during an active retreat. Supply allocation and advanced surgical care are strictly prioritized for Rhodes Island personnel first. We've applied some sealant, packed the entry points, and administered a heavy dose of blood-expanders to stabilize them for a few hours. That is all we can spare."

"Mmm," Mostima hummed softly, leaning back against the frame of the door. "Sounds a bit cold for a medical organization, doesn't it? My partner just drove through half an army's crossfire to bring you those medical crates you're holding."

"And we are grateful," the medic replied coldly, "but gratitude doesn't buy extra plasma or open up a ruined surgical bay. Without immediate full-scale abdominal surgery, internal cauterization, and blood transfusions, things we literally cannot offer non-RI personnel right now, their chance of surviving the next six hours is practically zero. If you stay here, they bleed out on a gurney in the mud. If you drive back, maybe you reach a civilian hospital in time. Your choice."

Mostima looked at the medic for a long moment, her expression unreadable, though her narrowed eyes were clear as day. "I see. Well, thanks for the patch job, then."

"We're sorry," the medic muttered, turning away as the remaining field staff cleared out of the cab, hauling the last of the resupply crates.

Mostima stepped back into the truck, pulling the heavy door shut and cutting off the deafening roar of the warzone outside. She climbed over the console and leaned over your seat, adjusting the thermal blanket the medics had carelessly draped across your chest.

You blinked up at her, your vision swimming with dark spots, the cold lingering deep in your bones despite the heavy blanket.

"Mosti..." you rasped, your voice little more than a thin whisper. "What... what did they say? Are they... taking me into the field bay?"

Mostima leaned in close, her hair brushing against your cheek. She reached out with her hand, gently smoothing back your hair, her touch remarkably soft. The playful curve of her lips was as perfectly composed as ever, completely devoid of panic, sorrow, or stress.

"Oh, you know how these military types are," she said smoothly, her tone light and airy. "Always so dramatic. They ran a few quick scans,

patched up the leaks, and told me you're completely stable."

"Stable...?" you echoed weakly, searching her face. "It... it feels like my stomach is on fire, Mosti..."

"That's just the pain meds working their magic," she lied seamlessly, without a single flicker of hesitation in her eyes. "They gave you the good stuff. In fact, they said your vitals look so solid that keeping you in a chaotic field bunker like this would just be a waste of time. They'd rather we start heading back right now so you can get some actual rest in a proper bed."

"So... I'm good to travel?"

"You're golden," Mostima said, leaning back and tapping your nose playfully with her gloved finger. "Everything's going to be just fine. We dropped off the cargo, fulfilled the contract, and now all we have to do is take a nice, peaceful drive home."

She reached down, carefully adjusting the incline of your seat to lay you back as comfortably as possible, tucking the edges of the thermal blanket tight around your shoulders.

"Just lie back and close your eyes if you need to," she added, stepping back into the driver's seat and turning the ignition. The engine roared back to life, its familiar rumble vibrating through the frame. "I'll handle the driving."

As the truck backed out of the landing bay and turned back toward the dark, hostile borderlands, Mostima stared out at the road ahead, her hands gripping the wheel, her calm smile holding firm against the silent clock ticking down in the passenger seat.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

The happy ending I promised you guys <3

Chapter Notes

I am a danger to mostima myself and others mostly myself tho but I also really wanna punch that blue thnig in the face

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The delivery truck glided through the pitch-black expanse of the barren badlands, far from the roaring explosions and gunfire that had been your entire world only hours earlier. Outside, the night was vast and hollow, illuminated only by the faint, pale glow of Terra's twin moons. Inside the cab, the heater hummed softly, pushing lukewarm air against the frost creeping up the lower edges of the windshield.

Your eyelids felt heavier with every mile. The sharp, searing agony in your gut had slowly dulled into a deep, freezing ache, spread thin across your entire lower body.

"Hey, Mosti..." you murmured, your voice barely carrying over the quiet drone of the tires.

"Hm? Still awake over there?" Mostima replied quickly, her eyes fixed on the empty black ribbon of highway ahead. "I was thinking you'd finally managed to fall asleep."

"I'm trying..." You forced your eyes open, but the dashboard lights blurred into streaks of amber and green. "Just... hard to focus. What... what city are we heading toward again?"

"A nice, quiet border town in Victoria," she said lightly, her voice flowing with that easy, familiar charm. "Great little place. They have this small bakery near the central square that makes these really good pastries. I figure we can grab a few before we check into a hotel."

"Sounds... nice..." You nodded off for a few seconds, your chin slumping toward your chest before you jerked yourself awake with a ragged breath. "Mosti?"

"Right here."

"I don't think... the pain meds are working anymore." Your breathing was thin, shallow, rustling against the edge of the thermal blanket. Every word felt like lifting a mountain. "I... I think I'm dying, Mosti."

Mostima's hands remained relaxed on the leather steering wheel. She didn't turn her head, didn't break her gaze from the dark horizon ahead.

"Now don't go making wild assumptions," she hummed softly. "You've just had a long day. Getting shot tends to tire a person out."

"No... I know..." You squeezed your eyes shut, feeling a cold tear slip down your cheek, mixing with the grime on your face. You couldn't feel your fingers anymore. The darkness at the edges of your vision was closing in, suffocatingly so.

Slowly, the truck began to decelerate. The tires crunched over loose gravel as Mostima pulled the transport off the empty road, bringing the vehicle to a complete stop in the middle of nowhere. She killed the headlights, plunging the cab into near-total darkness, saved only by the faint, dim flicker of her halo above her head.

The engine idled down into silence.

Mostima didn't move. She kept both hands resting at ten and two on the steering wheel, staring straight ahead into the endless, silent void of the desert. She didn't look over at you.

"Sorry..." you rasped, your voice shrinking to a frail, trembling whisper. "I'm sorry... for not being stronger, Mosti."

No answer.

"Look at... Rhodes Island. Look at Penguin Logistics..." You let out a weak, shaky breath, your head resting limply against the cold glass of the passenger window. "Everyone else... they're like monsters. All cool and stuff... taking hits, using arts, fighting armies... I got hit by... two stupid bullets... and that's it."

You forced a faint, dry laugh that turned into a quiet cough, a drop of dark crimson leaking from the corner of your lip.

"That's our job though, isn't it? Transporters like me... we're expendable. Just normal people... filling out space in the cab... I knew what I signed up for..."

Mostima sat motionless. Her expression remained completely serene, a vast, closed book.

"Mosti...?" you whispered, your vision dimming so fast you could barely see her silhouette anymore.

"I'm listening."

"Are you... are you gonna get a new partner after this?"

Once again she made no attempt to offer you anything, tracing her gaze you saw it fixed on the empty horizon where the black soil met the starlit sky.

You let out a faint, shaking breath, accepting the quiet for what it was.

"Hey, Mosti...?" you rasped, your chest barely rising under the blanket. "Can we... can we go outside? Just for a minute... It's really warm in here... and I want to see the sky."

For the first time since pulling over, Mostima shifted, head turning to finally look at you.

"Outside?" she repeated softly, her voice smooth and light. "Yeah. I can do that for you."

She unbuckled her seatbelt and stepped out of the driver's side, the cold night air rushing into the cab as the door swung open. A moment later, your side clicked open. Mostima stood in the frame, the chill of the Kazdelian wastes whipping her oversized black coat around her. Without a word, she reached in, her hands sliding under your shoulders and knees.

She lifted you slowly, gently hauling you out of the seat into the freezing, crisp night air. Every movement sent a dull, throbbing echo through your core, but the bite of the wind against your face felt strangely clearing. Like you were finally starting to wake up from a dream.

She walked a few paces away from the truck, setting you down on a flat, dry patch of grass and gravel beside the road. She laid you on your back so you were facing straight up into the endless expanse of the Terran sky, a vast, pitch-black canvas spilled over with brilliant, cold stars and the shimmering ribbons of distant aurorae.

She lowered herself right onto the dirt next to you, turning onto her side with one arm propped under her head, her eyes looking down at your face, then up at the cosmos above.

"Not a bad view, right?" she murmured, her voice carrying easily in the stillness of the desert. "You know, back at Rhodes Island, you almost never get to see the stars like this. Too much smog, too many high-rises. But out here in the middle of nowhere... it's just you and the whole universe."

"It's... really big..." you whispered, your words slurred, drifting like smoke in the freezing air. You couldn't feel the ground beneath you anymore. Your body felt light, like you were slowly floating away into that dark ocean above.

"It is," Mostima agreed, the smile stagnating on her face. "I've traveled across almost every corner of this continent, you know. I've seen the mobile cities lit up like floating jewelry boxes, I've seen ancient ruins... but I think I like these quiet nights on the road the best. Especially when I'm not driving alone."

You tried to turn your head toward her, but your neck wouldn't obey. "Mosti... I'm... really tired now..."

"I know," she said smoothly, her tone unchanged, warm and conversational. "Just hang on a little longer. Look right over there, see those three bright stars in a line? There was a name for them, somebody told me once. Though I can't seem to remember right now..."

She kept talking, her voice a steady, melodious anchor in the dark. She told you about all kinds of things. People and places, about where she wanted to go, things she wanted to do. Stories about all the small things, things you remembered.

"Mosti..." you breathed, the sound barely a puff of frost leaving your lips.

"Hey," she said gently.

"I... wan... e.....?"

You couldn't muster out the syllabls in your mind. Your eyelids fluttered shut. The cold, the fading pain, the hum of her voice, everything gently dissolved into a profound weightlessness. Your chest gave one last, shallow rise, and then stilled completely.

Mostima didn't stop talking.

"...and then, of course, Exusiai tried to fix the oven herself, which went about as well as you'd expect," she continued softly, her eyes staring down at your quiet face.

She reached out, her hand resting gently over yours, holding onto your limp, cold fingers in the freezing dust. The smile remained on her lips, but her eyes were completely still, reflecting the cold, distant light of the stars above.

"We had to pay for the kitchen repairs out of our own bonus," she murmured to the empty silence of the wilderness, her voice dropping into a quiet, solitary echo. "You should've seen it."

She sat there beside you in the middle of nowhere, holding onto your hand, continuing her story to the open sky.

Chapter End Notes

> Lwky jealous of the characters I write sometimes, I wish it was that easy to just die, to just lay down and just let it happen but it probably hurts a lot more and stuff and that sounds kind of ass but just imagine that I'm like really cool and stoic and nonchalant and not afraid to die cause it sounds really cool like a really long nap

End Notes

This will totally have a happy ending you have to believe me trust I would never lie to you everyone is gonna walk away all happy and im a fluff writer i write fluff and sunshine and icecream

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